



## *Connecticut Department of Social Services*

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **State Receives Federal Approval for 'SNAP' Replacement Aid After Blizzard**

(HARTFORD, CT) – Over 2,300 southeastern Connecticut households enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will receive storm-related food replacement benefits on Saturday, Feb. 23, Department of Social Services Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby announced today.

The state's application for \$222,721 in SNAP replacement benefits for low-income residents in areas hit hardest by power outages in the February blizzard was approved this week by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, Commissioner Bremby said.

The automatic replacement benefits will go to SNAP-enrolled households in East Lyme, Lyme, North Stonington, Old Lyme, Stonington and Waterford, based on analysis of power outages and federal guidelines.

Connecticut joins Rhode Island and Massachusetts in gaining federal approval to issue replacement benefits to eligible households in certain areas affected by the storm. The replacement benefits were approved for SNAP-enrolled households in the six identified municipalities in New London County where more than 50% of residents lost power for at least four hours.

A total of 2,303 SNAP-enrolled households (approximately 3,800 people) will automatically receive 45% of their February benefit amount in electronic benefit transfer accounts this Saturday. SNAP benefits can be used only for federally-approved food items at supermarkets, grocery stores and farmers' markets.

"This equates to replacement benefits ranging from \$7 to over \$500, depending on income and household size," said Commissioner Bremby. "The average replacement benefit is estimated at \$95."

State officials used power outage and damage assessments to determine the geographical areas to be covered by SNAP replacement benefits, in accordance with federal program guidelines.

### **Individual requests for replacement benefits**

SNAP recipients who lost food as a result of the February blizzard can also make a special request for replacement benefits, regardless of where they live in Connecticut. Individual requests may be made for reimbursement of the cost of food originally

purchased with SNAP benefits in February and spoiled due to losing power through outage of at least 4 hours.

For information on the individual SNAP benefit replacement process, enrollees can visit [www.211ct.org](http://www.211ct.org) (beginning Saturday, Feb. 23), or call 2-1-1 (toll-free). Storm-related food loss must be reported by March 5, 2013, at 4:30 p.m.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps, is the nation's main anti-hunger program for low-income individuals and families. In Connecticut, the program currently enrolls 220,000 households.

Commissioner Bremby thanked the Obama Administration and USDA Food and Nutrition Service officials for their fast response to Connecticut's appeal for replacement food benefits.

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